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W O R K S T A T I O N N E W S

Tempo II Plus picks up macro pace

Records, plays back complex sequences

By Henry Norr

San Francisco — Tempo II Plus, the latest incarnation of Affinity Microsystems Ltd.'s macro package, will go on sale at this week's Macworld Expo here.

Tempo II, a Startup document (INIT), allows users to record and play back sequences of keystrokes and mouse movements, even complex sequences that involve multiple programs and conditional branching. The new release adds several complementary utilities and more than 40 externals written in

high-level languages that can be incorporated into Tempo macros.

Among the externals (some of which were previously available in a \$29.95 add-on package called Tempo+ Tools) is one that presents a dialog box with a text-entry field for user input and up to six buttons that launch macros. Another external, BitMatch, can test a region of the screen for a specific bit-mapped image and branch to another macro based on the result; it could be used, for instance, to launch a macro to retrieve electronic mail if there is an arrow pointing at an on-screen inbox icon. PlaySnd lets a macro play

digitized sounds to prompt a user for input, report when a task is completed or explain a procedure.

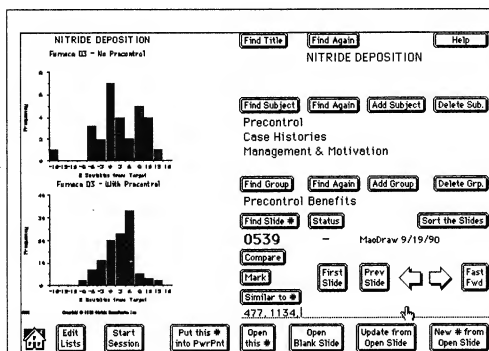
Other new externals let users create a list of non-contiguous pages to be printed from a document; carry out file-management functions such as moving, renaming and deleting files; and read information such as current Chooser selections.

Utilities from the Tools package include Tempo Plus Menu, a separate INIT that offers easy access to selected macros from a pull-down menu, and Tempo Plus Viewer, an application that lists the contents of macros, makes it possible to view and change variables, and allows localization for any of 25 languages.

A new utility, Resource Mover, lets users record sounds for use in a macro and move externals, variables and sounds from one macro to another.

Affinity will offer several upgrade plans to current owners, depending on what version of Tempo they own and when and how they purchased it. The standard price for users who bought the retail Tempo II package will be \$49.95.

Affinity is at 1050 Walnut St., Suite 425, Boulder, Colo. 80302. Phone (303) 442-4840 or (800) 367-6771; fax (303) 442-4999. □



Using Tempo II, John Servais automated management of a technical drawing library. By clicking buttons in a HyperCard stack (shown here), users can quickly retrieve drawings from MacDraw files and place them in presentations.

How power users keep up the Tempo

Although it has had to compete with a free program (Apple's MacroMaker), another application that comes bundled with one of the most widely used of all Mac applications (AutoMac III, shipped with Microsoft Word) and a popular commercial product (CE Software Inc.'s QuickKeys), Affinity Microsys-

tems' Tempo II has remained the macro program of choice among many power users and developers seeking to automate complex operations.

Last month, several of them explained what they have done with the program already and what the new Tempo II Plus adds.

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► **Rockwell International.** Don Hamilton, education development specialist at the Rockwell International Information Systems Center in Seal Beach, Calif., used Tempo II and extensions to develop a special Mac IIcx-based workstation for Lillian Scaife, a blind employee. With Tempo as the "glue" linking HyperCard, MacinTalk and Xerox Corp.'s Accutext optical character recognition software, it allows her to scan documents that are recognized, saved and read aloud to her line by line, word by word or letter by letter.

Hamilton said the workstation, STEVIE (the System To Empower Visually Impaired Employees), has allowed Scaife to advance from carrying mail and answering phones to her current position as coordinator of Rockwell's nationwide computer-based training network. Tempo II Plus' new BitMatch external also will let him extend the system to incorporate a wider range of applications.

► **Dow Chemical.** Phil Kalina, a specialist at Dow Chemical Co. in Midland, Mich., used Tempo II and extensions to develop a series of macros that retrieve and reformat text from company mainframes for Dow's Packaging and Design department, which is responsible for creating labels for all Dow products.

The macro set that handles downloading, working with Digital Communications Associates Inc.'s MacIRMA, automatically logs the file name, date and time of downloading into a Microsoft Word file. Using the BitMatch external, the macros watch the MacIRMA screen until all selected files have been downloaded, at which point they log off automatically.

Another macro set automatically replaces plus signs with bullets, enters degree symbols and several hundred other formatting changes to downloaded text. The macro cuts time required to reformat a typical document from about 25 minutes to 45 seconds, Kalina said.

► **Northwest House.** John Servais, a Mac consultant at Northwest House in Bellingham, Wash., used Tempo II to create a system that manages a library of more than 1,000 technical drawings used in presentations by Pete Shainin, a well-known quality-control consultant.

One sequence that starts in MacDraw automatically puts a thumbnail version of a drawing on a new card in HyperCard, enters a sequential identifying number into a field on the card, goes back to MacDraw and pastes the same number onto the drawing, and saves the file with a name that includes both the number and information stored in another Tempo variable. Another sequence, activated by a button in the thumbnail stack, retrieves the selected drawing from HyperCard and pastes it, with name and number, into Microsoft PowerPoint.

Servais said the system lets Shainin or an assistant assemble a presentation with 200 to 300 slides in an afternoon, compared with the several days the task previously required. "And there's a lot less dreariness, too," he added.

► **Packer Software.** A developer and reseller of complete small-business management systems based on Claris Corp.'s FileMaker database line, Packer uses Tempo II to complement FileMaker's scripting capabilities, said Sandy MacKay, president of the Mystic, Conn., company. Jeff Gagné, Packer's lead programmer, said his collection of Tempo sequences includes one that cycles through all records in a database by clicking on FileMaker's book icon and one that automatically debits an inventory database when an invoice is completed.

"Anything you want a program to do, this'll let you do it," Gagné said. "It's one of the most unsung products around. Sometimes I wonder why it isn't at the top of everyone's list." — By Henry Norr